

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION
MARCH 19, 2019 – 5:59 PM
PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON PRESIDING**

1. Karen Kinney, County Clerk, called the roll: (Record)

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Reagan, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl, K. Swanson

TOTAL PRESENT 23

R. Oelke, M. Mayberry

TOTAL ABSENT 2

2. President Swanson introduced Jay Verstraete, Indian Bluff Golf Course Superintendent, who addressed the Commission regarding the upcoming events and improvements at the golf course.

Mr. Verstraete stated, "For those that don't know me, I am Jay Verstraete, the Golf Course Superintendent at Indian Bluff. I have been out there going on 16 years now. Time flies and am looking forward to the next 15 or 16 years, however long you guys want to keep me around. We've had some pretty exciting things going on out there. First and foremost, we decided to get straight to the source of our customer base that enjoys the Bluff and see what we can do to make them spend more time there and more money and get more people out there in general. As such, we had Augustana College come out with a grad student and do a comprehensive survey of the clients we had out there on a day to day basis, week to week. One of the things that they pointed out that they would like to see improved was the condition of the cart paths and the tee areas. So, we started in on them and identified the main areas to improve, the holes that needed the most improvement. We started the construction out there and built more tees, both to lengthen the golf course and shorten it up for the seniors to attract a broader spectrum of players. We are trying to increase the women golfers, definitely a market we need to expand on as well as youth golf. So, we shortened the golf course up. We are trying to attract new customers too and are working with the City of Moline. They are looking at expanding a neighborhood on the South side of the golf course. And fortunately, we might also have the opportunity to tap into the city water system instead of just using the well water that we currently have that has to be treated and goes through peaks and valleys as far as quality is concerned. This has caused a host of problems over the years, it's not really economically challenging, but it is definitely something that will improve the facility if we can tap into that. So, we are working with the City of Moline on that. We did some engineering surveys this year to look at some of the ways we can increase the water ways. We had some run-off issues, we could

easily reclaim as wetland to get more diversity on the property. We get a lot of high and dry land out there. So, we are looking at raising the water level out there on the golf course. Hole number 18 is the closest one to the golf course. The lake there now has become silted in over the years. That's an area we identified that we can raise up a good four to six feet. As such, we would be increasing the water/wetland on the other side of the dike that is there now. And, we would probably be adding one and a half of upwards to three acres of land simply by raising the pond level, which would also be aesthetically pleasing to the golfers and make it a much improved golf hole. That's in the works. Moving forward, like I said the cart paths are in the coming years. We've got a big expansion of the native areas we are letting come back to the golf course preserve property there. It would definitely improve the birds, bees and deer...mink, coyotes and fox, everything we see out there. I recognize a lot of faces in here but I would encourage anybody that has the time to come out and see the property, especially this time of year I am going to be there eight days a week for the next six or seven months. I am easy to find if you want a personal tour, I would be happy to show you the property. There are some really neat things out there that are fortunately off the beaten path. It's there and would love to see these face a little bit more often than we do. If there is any questions or anything?"

Commissioner L. Moreno was recognized.

Mr. L. Moreno asked, "Speaking about the off beaten path, can you talk a bit more about the Native American issue."

Mr. Verstraete answered, "There is a section of the Sauk Fox Trail that is still out on the golf course. It cuts through holes 8, 9 and 10. It's very noticeable on parts of number 9 and actually number 11 as well. To the best of my knowledge, it's one of the last remaining in this area out there; everything else has been tilled over, road put over and things of that nature. Unfortunately, I don't have any documentation of that anymore. When I first started working at the golf course, we had an article from one of the old newspapers from the 1940's I think it was...that identified what it actually was. I did a little research on my own out on the internet, if you will...and there are some historic maps out there that actually show it very clearly fingered through this whole area. So, it's a really neat thing that is, unfortunately, not identified as much as it should be. I would like to get a nice rock of some kind or talk to the historical society about getting a historical marker or plaque, something to identify what it is. If you see it, you might think that's an odd place to have a drain line, if you will because it just looks like a dent in the ground. But it was identified as part of the Sauk Fox Trail that the Native Americans used around here for hundreds of years."

Commissioner O'Brien was recognized.

Ms. O'Brien asked, "As a follow up to that, Jay could you contact the Native American Society of the Quad Cities? Perhaps they would have resources or properly mark the spot with their input and it would be respectful to them. I think they would be excited if you approached them."

Mr. Verstraete answered, "Yes, I will definitely contact them."

President Swanson asked, "Any other questions for Mr. Verstraete? Well, we know that his is doing a fantastic job and you've heard that he is engaged in all kinds of partnerships and the stuff that you are doing is really appreciated across the District. I put in a plug for what he just said...before we let him go, if you have not had a familiarization tour, Mr. Craver...it is one of his favorite things to do, take Commissioners out to the various facilities. And, they will treat you like royalty and show you things that the general public doesn't normally get a chance to see. So, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of it and do one of those visualization tours. And, Mr. Verstraete, thank you for coming."

Mr. Verstraete stated, "Thank you for having me...thank you very much!"

(Group Applause)

3. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve the February 19, 2019, Forest Preserve Commission minutes, as presented. Commissioner Cremeens seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS: (None)**

5. **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:**

President Swanson stated, "What I would add is, another way to see those facilities is the Executive Committee holds its meetings, as the weather gets warmer; which are the Tuesday prior to our full Commission meetings...we will be meeting at each one of the facilities. So, if you look at the Forest Preserve website, you are very welcome to join us because we often try to spend some time at that facility. So, whether it's Niabi, Loud Thunder, Illiniwek, Indian Bluff, you are welcome to take part in the Committee."

Commissioner Boswell-Loftin asked, "What time is that?"

President Swanson answered, "Those are at 3:30 pm on the Tuesday prior to the Commission meeting, like the other Committee meetings. But, we move those

around and if the time should have to change, that is updated on the website. Alright...thank you very much for that question."

6. Commissioner Brunk moved to approve the claims in the Forest Preserve General Fund in the amount of \$33,513.87, Niabi Zoo Fund claims in the amount of \$118,277.93, Loud Thunder Spillway & Improvement Fund claims in the amount of \$48,109.27. Commissioner P. Moreno seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

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TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner O'Brien moved to approve the Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$25,135.44. Commissioners Simmer and Vyncke seconded. (Record)

A roll call vote was taken.

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TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Langdon moved to waive the reading and approve the Transfers of Appropriations in the Niabi Zoo Fund, as presented. Commissioner Brunk seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

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TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner O'Brien moved to approve the FY19 Appropriation Amendment loaning the Marvin Martin Fund up to \$20,000.00 from the General Fund, as presented. Commissioner Maranda seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Reagan, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

10. **Comments from Commissioners (One)**

Commissioner Maranda was recognized.

Mr. Maranda asked, "The next E-Board meeting will be out at the Bluff, so I would like to invite everybody out there...and then get to the Zoo, everybody should get their membership."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you. Since that wasn't said in the microphone, I will just repeat it for you. Come out and join us for the Executive Committee at Indian Bluff and get a behind the scenes look there. But also, get your Zoo memberships. You can buy those online and that enables you to take full advantage of that incredible resource."

Mr. Craver stated, "We will be at the Zoo in April..."

President Swanson asked, "The Zoo in April?"

Mr. Craver added, "...right before the opening."

President Swanson added, "Oh that's right, we want to get to the zoo just before the opening. But Mr. Maranda you put in a plug for the Indian Bluff too,"

Mr. Maranda stated, "I can be corrected...sorry."

President Swanson added, "So, that's even more reason to go online and get your Zoo membership before you come out to the E-Board meeting in April. How does that sound?"

Commissioner Deppe was recognized.

Mr. Deppe stated, "I would like to invite everybody out on May 11th for walk-for-wishes for Make-A-Wish and they are going to be doing a walk at the Zoo that day. I will put something in everybody's mailbox."

President Swanson reiterated, "So that's Saturday, May 11th...and are you looking online? I understand on the website that some volunteers might be needed as early as 8 am?"

Mr. Deppe answered, "Yes, sir."

President Swanson added, "And, participants too...and anybody that wants to make a donation to Make-A-Wish...it's a Saturday...and we are very grateful for the partnerships that we can help members of our community out to our Zoo. Thank you Mr. Deppe for your leadership with Make-A-Wish. Any other comments from Commissioners? That is great news that we've shared."

11. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve all the Routine Reports from the Director and Department Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission. Commissioner O'Brien seconded. (Record)

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated, "So, again, a few things to share that are going on. Camping is going to be opening up about a week late this year due to cold weather. But, we've decided that bad weather ends now and will not bother us this year. Part of the reason was because the water couldn't be turned on until the levels were consistently in the 40's. We had a few questions from constituents...the fish biologists were working with the Lake George stock and is recommending we keep the lake level low until after a critical level in the spawn cycle. So, if you like catching fish in addition to just standing there with just a bobber in the water, you will explain to your constituents that we are going to

delay based on the recommendation of the fish biologists. We should have the level back in mid to late May and have it back where we want it."

The next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission is Tuesday, April 16, 2019, immediately following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board.

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting recessed.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Karen Kinney by. Rich Camlin, Chief Dep.

KAREN KINNEY
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

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